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**SECRETARY KAWAMURA EMPHASIZES THAT CALIFORNIA
TOMATOES ARE NOT INVOLVED IN SALMONELLA OUTBREAK**

SACRAMENTO, June 10, 2008 – California Department of Food and Agriculture A.G. Kawamura issued the following statement today on the salmonella outbreak traced to tomatoes produced outside of California:

“We have been communicating with the FDA and officials there have stated definitively that California tomatoes are not involved in the outbreak. California tomato growers were not in production when the illnesses were contracted. Our state’s tomatoes are safe to eat, wholesome, and California-grown. That includes round, red and Roma tomatoes.

“Regardless of the source of this outbreak, it is important to remember how fortunate we are to have systems in place to quickly detect illnesses, identify their cause, and investigate their origin. We must also work to prevent food-borne illnesses in the first place, and California is a leader in that regard.

“As the source of about half of the nation’s fruits and vegetables, California is in a unique position to press for increased vigilance about food safety, and we consider it our responsibility to do so. We have made strides in recent years by promoting the use of best practices for farmers, processors and others involved in bringing our food supply to market.

“Californians deserve and enjoy the safest food supply in the world, and we are committed to maintaining the vigilance and innovation that make such a system possible.”

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The California Department of Food and Agriculture protects and promotes California's agricultural industry. California's farmers and ranchers produce a safe, secure supply of food, fiber and shelter; marketed fairly for all Californians; and produced with responsible environmental stewardship.